

NSC BRIEFING

27 March 1957

LATEST SYRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

I. After two weeks of move and counter-move in Syria, the three principal Army factions--left, right, neutral--have reached a stalemate.

- A. The main leftist leader, G-2 chief Sarraj, still holds his post.
- B. Other officers, including conservatives, are scheduled for transfer, but no moves are known to have taken place.

25X1A II. [REDACTED] despite a loss of conservative momentum, there are favorable signs for a "second round" as reportedly promised by the Syrian Army's chief-of-staff and President Quwatli.

25X1A A. [REDACTED] rifts between Syria's left and rightist factions are now clear, supporters are committed, and even President Quwatli--by siding with the rightists--has burned one more of his bridges to the left.

25X1A B. [REDACTED] prestige of rightist leaders has been raised by their courageous challenge to the leftists, who no longer appear as omnipotent and omniscient as before.

- 1. Other rightists now HAVE confidence in Nufouri, whom they previously doubted.

Noting that Saudi Arabia has supported conservative moves, while Egypt has backed leftists,--[REDACTED] points out 25X1A that the cracks in Egypt-Syria-Saudi solidarity have thus been widened.

- 1. In this connection, a 26 Mar Saudi-Lebanese communique states these two countries will plan together to combat

25X1A
[Handwritten signatures]
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communist influence.

25X1A

III. In addition, a new factor has now appeared. [REDACTED]

25X1A [REDACTED] the extreme rightist Syrian Social National Party-- a tough outfit whose cadres to neighboring Lebanon receive para-military training--intends to take "indirect" anti-leftist action in Syria at once.

A. If such "indirect" action--perhaps provocation in leftist disguise, designed to stiffen the spines and force a union of other Syrian rightist groups--does not do the job, the SSNP intends to make direct moves using its sympathizers in the Syrian Army.

1. Party claims one of its members is commander of the Damascus garrison, another is head of armor.

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- I. After two weeks of move and counter-move in Syria, the three principal Army factions--left, right, neutral--have reached a stalemate.
 - A. The main leftist leader, G-2 chief Sarraj, still holds his post.
 - B. Other officers, including conservatives, are scheduled for transfer, but no moves are known to have taken place.
- II. However, a new factor has appeared.

25X1C

25X1C [REDACTED] the extreme rightist Syrian Social National Party--a tough outfit that sends its cadres to neighboring Lebanon for paramilitary training--intends to take indirect anti-leftist action in Syria at once.

- A. If such indirect action--designed to stiffen the spines of other Syrian rightist groups--does not do the job, the SSNP intends to make direct moves using regular army sympathizers.
 1. Party claims one of its members is commander of the Damascus garrison, another is head of armor.
 - B. Discipline and determination in SSNP are impressive, although Party is tainted in eyes of Syrian mob by association with Iraq and "imperialists".

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